

**A  
BRIEF  
HISTORY  
OF**



**LITTLE ROCK  
AIR FORCE BASE  
AND  
THE 314<sup>th</sup> AIRLIFT WING**

Current as of 9 March 2007

**Emblem:** Azure, on a pale or a sword palewise point to base argent, grip vert, between in dexter base a parachute and another in sinister chief white, all within a diminished bordure yellow.

**Significance:** The blue field and the yellow pale are the Air Force colors. The two parachutes represent the aerial delivery of combat troops and equipment, the end result of the wing's primary mission. The sword symbolizes both the wing's commitment to the defense of the United States and the wing's integral role in the application of aerospace power.

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## **A SHORT HISTORY OF LITTLE ROCK AIR FORCE BASE, ARKANSAS**

Over the years, the men and women of the Jacksonville community have developed and cultivated a high level of pride in their local base. This stems from both the base's unique origins and the important aircraft and missions that have been assigned. From the beginning, Little Rock AFB has played a major role in accomplishing the US Air Force mission, carving out a rich heritage along the way.

In late 1951, after learning of the Air Force's desire for a new base in the central United States, local leaders sent a letter to the Secretary of the Air Force urging serious consideration of the Little Rock area. The Air Force was warm to the idea, but Congress would not allocate funds to purchase the needed property. In an ambitious move, the local leaders convinced Pentagon officials that funds would be raised locally, then the land would be purchased and donated to the Air Force. In January 1952, the Air Force agreed to the proposal, and local citizens went to work.



**On 12 January 1952, Everett Tucker Jr. returned from Washington with the agreement. Pictured (L-R): Mayor Pratt C. Rummel; H.C. (Don) Couch Jr.; Arch Campbell; Tucker; James I. (Ike) Teague; and Harry W. Pfeifer Jr.**

The fund-raising effort was immense, but by the end of September 1952, the Pulaski County Citizens Council (forerunner of today's Air Base Community Council) had collected almost a million dollars, and the Air Base Committee began buying property from more than 150 private

landowners near Jacksonville. That same month, the Air Force announced it would build a \$31 million jet bomber base on the site. The fund raising and purchase process took nearly 18 months, but the land needed most urgently was purchased first, and construction began on 8 December 1953.

The Air Force decided to assign the base to Strategic Air Command, and by August 1954, SAC had selected the 70th Reconnaissance Wing as the first assigned organization. The 70 RW flew RB-47 Stratojet aerial reconnaissance aircraft and KC-97 aerial refueling aircraft. SAC also decided to assign the 384th Bombardment Wing to the new base. This wing also flew Stratojets, but they were B-47s in bomber configurations.

As these two wings awaited movement orders, Colonel Joseph A. Thomas arrived as the first base commander (4225th Air Base Squadron) in February 1955. His primary duties were to oversee the construction, coordinating with various levels of government. Tragically, barely five months after assuming command, Colonel Thomas died in a crash of the base's only aircraft, a C-45 assigned for administrative transportation. Before his death, Colonel Thomas was able to oversee the completion of numerous projects, including the gas distribution system, several buildings, and the railroad system. Thomas Avenue and the Thomas Community Activities Center were dedicated in honor of his tireless efforts.

Airmen had begun to arrive at the base in 1954, but no living quarters were available on base yet. Consequently, some airmen lived in temporary quarters at Camp Robinson, while others lived in rooms at the Little Rock YMCA. Some were even housed in the private homes of local citizens. This housing problem would continue for many years.

The 70 RW activated at the not-yet-completed base on 24 January 1955. The 384 BW soon followed, activating on 1 August 1955. On this same date, the 825th Air Division moved to the base and became the first level of higher authority in the chain of command for the two wings. Neither wing had aircraft on the new base yet, but the 70th had the advantage of staging at Lockbourne AFB, Ohio, prior to moving their aircraft in. The 384th, on the other hand, was standing up an alert bomber wing from scratch, with aircrews in the student pipeline and no aircraft yet assigned.

At 8:00 AM on 10 September 1955, the base was opened to air traffic. In a special ceremony, local leaders and assigned personnel welcomed the arrival of the 70 RW aircraft. These RB-47s included three very special ones: the "Razorback," "City of Little Rock," and "City of Jacksonville." Although this was the defining moment, these aircraft were actually not the first RB-47s to land at the base. Two aircrews had landed three days prior for a one-night familiarization visit. Visual Omni Range was not yet established for the base, so aircrews flew VOR to Little Rock, then turned north and flew visual for the final stretch. Paint crews, still working on the runway, took a break as the aircraft made their final approach.

About a month later, on 9 October 1955, the base was officially dedicated. On this day, the Secretary of the Air Force, the Honorable Donald A. Quarles, and General Curtis E. LeMay, SAC Commander, joined about 85,000 visitors in the dedication of the Air Force's newest base. By that date, 90 buildings were either completed or in the final phase of construction, but the base was far from complete.



**B-47 landings were daily occurrences at Little Rock AFB from 1955 until 1964.**

During these early years, the 70 RW maintained an operational reconnaissance mission. Crewmembers and maintainers ensured we had an “eye in the sky,” launching missions from here at home and spending many months at various operating locations throughout the world. Prior to the emergence of U-2 aircraft, the B-47 was the perfect airframe to overfly and photograph potential adversaries. For most of the 1950s, nothing could touch a Stratojet. Surface-to-Air Missiles were in their infancy, Anti-Aircraft Artillery could not reach it, and enemy fighters could not climb to the Stratojet’s altitude. It could virtually fly with impunity.

While the 70 RW was a photographic reconnaissance organization, other RB-47s were equipped with sensitive monitoring equipment and flown right at and sometimes beyond the border into the USSR. This would prompt the Soviets to fire up their defenses, and the RB-47 crew would monitor, record, and bring home the data. This was then used as the basis for effective war plans to be carried out by bomb wings like the 384th. This cat-and-mouse game of testing a potential enemy was extremely perilous. Aircrews were pushing the limits, and many of them were shot from the sky without so much as a peep in the newspapers.



**Members of the 70th Reconnaissance Wing pose in front of one of their RB-47 aircraft.**

The 384 BW handled bomber alert duties, spending countless days and nights on alert status with their aircraft armed, fueled, and ready to go at a moment's notice. 384th aircrews also commonly participated in REFLEX operations, spending short but continually recurring periods of time at forward locations around the world.

The 384 BW accomplished a truly remarkable feat by being certified combat ready just nine months after receiving its first aircraft. Stringent SAC requirements called for a specified percentage of the crews to be certified in order for the wing to be considered combat ready. Since aircrew members were fresh out of student status, beginning to arrive about the same times the aircraft did, preparing the group to become fully combat ready was a tremendous task. The culture of the organization would accept nothing less than full effort, and when the newly formed wing was mission capable by September 1956, it became the first such SAC wing to do so in such a short time.

By mid-1957, there were over 5,500 military personnel assigned and over 300 civilian employees. This large increase in personnel in such a short time compounded the continuing housing problem, especially for the military members with families. Accordingly, the USAF hired Miles Construction to build 1,535 Capehart family housing units. By 1 May 1959, all the housing units were either occupied or ready for occupancy.

The 70 RW eventually shifted from a reconnaissance mission to a purely training mission and was redesignated the 70th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing. This training role would prove to be a

glimpse at the future of the base. On 2 June 1958, the wing accepted its first group of students and began training them to fly the Stratojet. This continued for over three years, then the wing switched from RB-47 to B-47 aircraft and became the 70th Bombardment Wing. The days of the 70th at Little Rock AFB came to an end on 25 June 1962 when the wing was inactivated. (The 70th exists today as the 70th Intelligence Wing at Fort Meade, Maryland.) Many of the aircrew members remained at the base and transferred to the 384 BW, which was still serving in a bomber alert role.

While Little Rock AFB was still home to the two Stratojet wings, The Air Force decided to base 18 Titan II Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles in underground silos around the base at an estimated cost of \$80 million. On 3 January 1961, work began on the first missile site. While construction on the silos continued, the 308th Strategic Missile Wing activated and began operations as a tenant unit at Little Rock AFB.

Work on the Titan II silos took three years to complete, and on 1 January 1964, the 308 SMW completed its first full operational day with missiles on alert in each of the 18 silos. Qualified crews supported the mission uninterrupted, 24 hours a day, for over 23 years.



**A Titan II missile convoy departs through the main gate in 1963.**

In 1962, the Arkansas Air National Guard became a presence at Little Rock AFB. Formerly operating out of Adams Field in Little Rock, the 189th Tactical Reconnaissance Group (forerunner to today's 189th Airlift Wing) began moving operations out to the base. The unit operated RB-57, RF-101, and KC-135 aircraft before eventually settling into the C-130 training role they share with the 314th today.

The era of the Stratojet ended on 1 September 1964 when the 384 BW inactivated. The 384th later activated at McConnell AFB, Kansas, but they had flown their last B-47. (The 384th is not an active wing today.)

The same day the 384 BW inactivated, the 43 BW, flying Convair B-58 Hustler aircraft, moved to Little Rock AFB from Carswell AFB, Texas. To fully appreciate the contributions of the 43 BW, it's necessary to consider at least a few of their accomplishments prior to their relocation to Little Rock.

The 43rd was initially activated at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, in 1947. During the early years, the wing operated B-29s, B-50s, and KB-29s. 43 BW crews set flight records with all three aircraft. The most notable occurred on 26 February 1949 when a 43rd crew flew a B-50A, nicknamed "Lucky Lady II," completing the first non-stop flight around the world. As a result, the crew won the Mackay Trophy and the Air Age Trophy. Accomplishing firsts, setting records, and earning awards would prove to be recurring themes for this remarkable wing.

As with the 70 RW and 384 BW, the 43rd entered the jet age, flying B-47s from 1953 to 1960. Again, the wing would set a record with their new aircraft, although it was completely unplanned. On 17 November 1954, Colonel David A. Burchinal, 43 BW Commander, and his B-47 crew ran into problems on a flight from Sidi Slimane, Morocco to RAF Fairford, England. Inclement weather prevented landing in England, and after a return to Sidi Slimane, they found that bad weather had moved in there, too. Having no other options, the B-47 crew arranged for air refuelings until the weather cleared up at one of the locations. After nine in-flight refuelings and 47 hours 35 minutes in the air, the Stratojet was able to land at RAF Fairford. During this 21,163 mile flight, they inadvertently shattered the previous jet endurance record.

When the Convair B-58 Hustler emerged from development, the 43rd was selected as the first wing to fly the new technological marvel. This required the 43rd to move to Carswell AFB in March 1960, where they conducted Category II and III evaluations with the new bomber and operated a school to train SAC aircrews in the B-58. Armed with the world's first supersonic bomber, it didn't take long for 43rd aircrews to begin setting records again.

In a deliberate effort to surpass several speed records a 43rd crew ran a 2,000 km (about 1,242 miles) course near Edwards AFB, California. On 12 January 1961, the crew set three international speed-with-payload records (0 kg, 1,000 kg, and 2,000 kg) by flying the course at an average speed of 1,061.8 mph. Interestingly, the 2,000 kg record still stands as of this writing. Two days later, another 43rd crew set three more speed-with-payload records (same weights) over a 1,000 km course, averaging 1284.73 mph. This feat on the 1,000 km course led to that crew receiving the 1961 Thompson Trophy. The distinction here is that, for the first time in its 33 year history, the trophy had been presented to a bomber crew.

Four months later, on 10 May 1961, another 43rd crew raced a closed course, again near Edwards AFB, in pursuit of the Bleriot Trophy. According to regulations for earning the prestigious international award, crews must fly a course that starts and finishes in the same spot, stay aloft longer than 30 minutes, and average a speed over 2,000 kph (1,242.74 mph). They completed the 666.7 mile course in 30 minutes 43 seconds, averaging 1,302.07 mph. In other words, with the 30-minute minimum, they almost had to slow down to qualify. This set a new record for sustained speed and earned the coveted trophy.

Sixteen days later, a Hustler flew from New York City to Paris in 3 hours, 19 minutes, and 41 seconds. The B-58 averaged 1,089 mph in the 4,612 mile flight and completed it in 1/10th the

time it took Charles Lindbergh to fly the route in 1927. This transatlantic flight earned the crew the Mackay Trophy (the seventh for the 43rd) and the Harmon International Trophy. Tragically, this crew was killed when their B-58 crashed on 3 June 1961 at the Paris Air Show. Though saddened by the loss, crews from the 43rd continued to set records with the Hustler.

On 5 March 1962, a B-58 crew set out to break three more speed records. The 43rd crew flew from New York to Los Angeles and back in 4 hours, 41 minutes, and 14.98 seconds. The crew took the bomber from New York to Los Angeles in two hours, 15 minutes, 50.8 seconds. This was the first transcontinental flight to “beat the sun.” All three crewmen earned the Mackay Trophy, the Bendix Trophy, Distinguished Flying Crosses, and congratulations from President John F. Kennedy.

On 28 March 1964, the day after a major earthquake devastated Alaska. Headquarters USAF tasked the 43rd to provide photographs of the region. Two 43 BW crews flew B-58s the 5,751 miles to Alaska and back, processed the film, and delivered the pictures to Washington DC an incredible 14 hours and 30 minutes after receiving the request.



**The B-58 was in development long before the viability of supersonic flight had even been tested. This was a huge gamble that paid off when the innovative aircraft advanced bomber performance from 400 mph to over 1,400 mph in a mere ten years!**

Six months later the 43d Bomb Wing moved to Little Rock AFB. The wing added KC-135 refuelers to its inventory and carried out its mission of strategic bombardment readiness and air refueling at their new home for five and a half years.

In mid-1969, the Air Force began to retire the B-58s. While there was no disputing the value of the airframe, the costs of maintaining the weapon system were incredible. The B-58 had followed a typical path in the life span of an aircraft. It started as an untouchable high altitude bomber, but advances in Soviet defensive technology forced planners to use the aircraft in a low

altitude bombing capacity. It worked quite well in this role (as had the B-47), but the stresses of low level flight began to cause lethal structural failures in the aircraft. The airframe had served its purpose, and it was simply time to move on.

The majority of the wing's bombers went to Davis-Monthan AFB for scrapping and reclamation, but eight were spared for static display. Most notably, aircraft #59-2458, the Bendix Trophy winner, was placed on display at the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

On 1 January 1970, the 825 AD, by this time called the 825th Strategic Aerospace Division, inactivated. On the last day of that month, after the retirement of its last B-58, the 43 BW inactivated. Today, the 43rd is alive and well as an airlift wing at Pope AFB, North Carolina. Flying C-130s, the wing shares a kinship with today's Little Rock AFB.



**The era of the Hercules began at Little Rock AFB in 1970.**

The Air Force decided to close Sewart AFB and move the 4442d Combat Crew Training Wing and 64th Tactical Airlift Wing, both flying the Lockheed C-130 Hercules, to Little Rock AFB. On 9 March 1970, the headquarters for the 64 TAW was established here, and on 1 April 1970, it became the host wing. The 308 SMW and 4442 CCTW became tenants. Also on this date, the base changed command ownership for the first time, becoming a Tactical Air Command base.

About a year later, on 31 May 1971, in a move that changed names more than substance, the 64 TAW inactivated, and the 314 TAW concurrently “moved” in. The relocation of the 314 TAW from Ching Chuan Kang Air Base, Taiwan was a move without personnel or equipment, and the subordinate units at Little Rock AFB were simply reassigned and redesignated from 64 TAW assets to 314 TAW assets. The mission and units actually remained the same.

A short time later, the base lost one of its three wings when, on 1 August 1971, the 4442 CCTW inactivated. The 314th absorbed the training role, and the change left the 308 SMW as the lone tenant unit.

The next major change occurred on 31 January 1972 when the base welcomed the 834 AD. On 1 December 1974, the 834 AD and 314 TAW transferred from TAC to Military Airlift Command, while the 308 SMW remained under the command of SAC. The additional layer of command and control from the 834 AD soon proved superfluous, however, and it was subsequently inactivated on 31 December 1974.

The base enjoyed relative stability for the next 13 years; the 314 TAW was the MAC host unit flying and training in C-130s, and the 308 SMW was the SAC tenant on alert with Titan II ICBMs.

This steady base structure changed on 18 August 1987 when the 308 SMW inactivated, going quietly into history as the last unit to perform operational duty with Titan II missiles. The unit left a demilitarized Titan II nosecone as a memorial to the thousands of men and women who devoted their lives and energy to protecting the United States during the Cold War. The day before the wing inactivated, this nosecone was placed in the air park atop a time capsule to be opened 50 years later in 2037.

Since 1987, the 314th has been the only active duty wing stationed at Little Rock AFB, but there have been numerous changes within the wing and at other levels.

In 1989, the wing welcomed the US Army Joint Readiness Training Center to Little Rock AFB. JRTC was the largest tenant unit on the base until it moved to Fort Polk, Louisiana just four years later.

On 1 June 1992, the base and wing were assigned to the new Air Mobility Command, the successor to MAC. This was short-lived, however, as the wing was assigned to Air Combat Command, a new command created to combine SAC and TAC, on 1 October 1993.

In June 1993, Little Rock AFB hosted the largest RODEO ever held. Formerly called VOLANT RODEO, this event featured C-5, KC-10, KC-135, C-141, and C-130 aircraft. Also, the annual Security Police (now Security Forces) competition DEFENDER CHALLENGE was combined with RODEO, making RODEO '93 the largest and most comprehensive RODEO to date.

In 1994, the 34th Combat Airlift Training Squadron redesignated as the USAF Combat Aerial Delivery School, culminating more than a year of effort by General John M. Loh, ACC Commander, to establish a "center of excellence" for the venerable C-130 aircraft.

On 1 April 1997, a major shakeup was made at the base. The 314th Airlift Wing, as it is now called, transferred to Air Education and Training Command. Also on this date, the 463d Airlift Group was activated at the base as a tenant under AMC, and the 50th and 61st Airlift Squadrons were reassigned from the 314 AW to the 463 AG. Finally, CADS was realigned under AMC's Air Mobility Warfare Center. The purpose of these changes was to move the C-130 schoolhouse under AETC while retaining AMC's control over operational aspects of C-130 operations. The primary aspects of this organizational structure remains in place today.

Since its official opening in October 1955, Little Rock AFB has been a valuable component of US air power. From the first day a B-47 went on alert in 1956 until the final Titan II went off alert in 1987, the men and women of The Rock were on the front lines of the Cold War and played a vital role in winning it. The Cold War was one of attrition, a race for technological advantage and a measure of both the resolve and economic strength of two nations. Although the superpowers never went toe-to-toe on the battlefield, it would be a misjudgment to underestimate the very real aspects of the contest and the very real cost of victory. Peace is protected through readiness, and Little Rock AFB has always been ready.

In the midst of the many changes seen at the base over the years, one other factor has always remained constant – outstanding relations between the base and the local community. To this day, community support remains one of the key ingredients making Task Force Rock the success that it is. In a time where community support can wane and bases are being routinely closed, Air Base Community Council President Larry Wilson may have said it best: “We gave this land to the Air Force, and we don’t want it back.” The community’s tireless support efforts have proved that many times over.

## BASE COMMANDERS

Col Joseph A. Thomas .....	1 February 1955
Col Joe R. Williams .....	12 July 1955
Col George D. Hughes .....	8 February 1957
Col James T. Gribble .....	Jr. 1 July 1958
Col Elmer G. Schoggen .....	21 September 1959
Col Carl C. Hinckle, Jr. ....	8 May 1961
Col Robert B. Nowell .....	4 October 1963
Col James E. Gueydan .....	1 August 1965
Col Gerald M. Clugston .....	21 March 1966
Col McLyle G. Zumwalt .....	25 March 1968
Col Theodore R. Dale .....	1 January 1970
Col Robert A. Ports .....	1 August 1970
Col Sam J. Pool .....	1 August 1972
Col Edwin J. Scarff .....	21 May 1973
Col Paul Kozelka .....	28 June 1974
Col Daurice C. Vest .....	29 August 1975
Col Charles E. Koeninger .....	17 January 1977
Col James B. Elmer .....	29 September 1978
Col Marlon C. Banks .....	1 May 1979
Col Edward T. Ladd .....	28 May 1980
Col William A. Jones .....	15 July 1980
Col Philip J. Riede .....	28 October 1983
Col William L. Arent .....	28 June 1985
Col Richard E. Pluchinsky .....	28 August 1989
Col Timothy W. Hatch .....	9 August 1991
* Col Charles J. Wax .....	30 November 1991
Brig Gen Fredric N. Buckingham .....	18 June 1993
Brig Gen Donald A. Streater .....	20 May 1994
Brig Gen Jack R. Holbein, Jr. ....	15 July 1996
Brig Gen Paul J. Fletcher .....	24 September 1998
Brig Gen David J. Scott .....	18 July 2001
Brig Gen Joseph M. Reheiser .....	15 September 2003
Brig Gen Kip L. Self .....	9 September 2005

\* In 1991, the title of base commander shifted from the Combat Support Group commander to the wing commander. Colonel Wax was the first such wing commander to be considered the base commander, although the term is now somewhat obsolete.

## **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE 314th AIRLIFT WING**

The 314th Airlift Wing traces its lineage back to the early days of World War II with the activation of the 314th Transport Group on 2 March 1942. First formed at Drew Field, Florida, the group moved to numerous stateside locations learning to operate C-47 transport aircraft. The group was redesignated the 314th Troop Carrier Group in July 1942, and its chain of command changed frequently during this hectic time. After stops at Bowman Field, Kentucky and Sedalia Army Air Field, Missouri, the group moved to Lawson Field, Georgia, in February 1943 to complete its training. In the spring of 1943, the training began to focus on the dropping of paratroopers and included a trip to Pope Field, North Carolina, for training in glider operations. As the stateside training drew to a close, the 314 TCG solidified its structure with the 32d, 50th, 61st, and 62d Troop Carrier Squadrons assigned, each consisting of roughly 13 to 16 C-47 aircraft. This number fluctuated greatly throughout WW II, but a little more than a dozen aircraft was the norm. The group was assigned to the 52d Troop Carrier Wing. (The 53 TCS, a part of the 314th today, was assigned to the 61 TCG during WW II. It was also a part of the 52 TCW, and its operations were nearly identical.)



**The C-47 was a workhorse in WW II. Its aircrews transported troops and supplies into battle during combat missions and ferried fuel and supplies whenever and wherever they were needed.**

Glider pilots were also a part of the 314th, but there was so much shuffling done with gliders that they only rarely operated together with their parent unit. When a combat mission was scheduled, troop carrier wings either towed gliders or transported paratroopers, never both. Since the 52 TCW did not happen to be assigned glider tows until later in the war, 314 TCG gliders

were usually towed into battle by other wings. When gliders were not used, many of the glider pilots worked with what they called “power pilots,” serving as copilots aboard C-47 aircraft. Members of the glider community were part aviator and part infantryman.



**Glider crews assigned to the 314 TCG flew CG-4 gliders into combat. Loaded with troops and supplies, the glider aircrews would become infantrymen on the ground until the area was secure and they could return home to prepare for another mission. When the gliders remained intact after a mission, which was by no means assured, some C-47s were equipped with hooks to snatch them from the ground.**

In May 1943, the group transferred overseas and was assigned to 12th Air Force in the Mediterranean theater of operations. After spending about a month based at Berguent Field in French Morocco, the group moved to Kairouan, Tunisia, and prepared for its first combat mission.

Allied forces invaded Sicily on 10 July 1943, and the 314th was at the forefront. Colonel Clayton Stiles, 314 TCG commander, led the group’s formation of 50 aircraft as they dropped airborne forces over the island in Operation HUSKY #1. Four ships failed to return that night, including Colonel Stiles’ plane, shot down over the Mediterranean on the way out. Fortunately, after spending some time in a rubber raft, his crew was picked up and returned. Overall, the mission consisted of 226 C-47 aircraft dropping about 3,400 paratroopers. It was viewed as a great success, setting the table for the beach landings, and serving to validate airborne operations.

The following day, Allied forces were in a precarious situation, and HUSKY #2 was hastily organized and ordered. The 314 TCG was part of a force of 144 aircraft that were to drop about 2,000 more paratroopers into the battle area. This required the formation to fly over 35 miles of battle front in bad weather, but those were just the *known* hazards. What was unknown was how friendly naval forces in the area were going to react. Partly due to a lack of communication and partly due to an enemy air attack on naval vessels immediately before the C-47s flew by, many Allied ships opened fire on the formation. The group pressed on and completed the mission, taking anti-aircraft fire from both friend and foe. Dropping more forces into the fight certainly

had its positive effects, but the price was steep. In all, 23 aircraft were shot down (including four from the 314th), many more were heavily damaged, and there were 229 casualties. For actions on the night of 11-12 July 1943, the group received its first Distinguished Unit Citation.

As Allied forces worked their way across Sicily, the 314th moved personnel and equipment in support. In early September, the group was able to move to the island, setting up operations near the town of Castlevetrano. From here, the group participated in the invasion of Italy.

Despite the fact that the Italians surrendered on the same day, the invasion of Italy on 8 September 1943 was met by stiff German resistance. Five days later, three successive airborne operations were ordered to provide reinforcements. Code named GIANT #1, #2, and #3, the 314th flew seven aircraft in the first operation on the 13 September and 35 aircraft during the second and third missions the next night. Making troop and supply drops near Salerno, Italy, these operations greatly contributed to the overall success of the invasion, and all 314th aircraft returned safely.

In February 1944, the group packed up yet again and moved to Saltby Air Field in England. All eyes began to focus on France, and training intensified as D-Day approached.



**The first Yacht Club. Officers of the 62 TCS pose in front of their elite watering hole at Saltby AB.**

After literally years of preparation, the invasion of France finally occurred on 6 June 1944. The 314 TCG participated in Operation NEPTUNE, the airborne/amphibious phase of Operation OVERLORD, taking off at 2321 hours the night before. Colonel Stiles once again led a formation of 60 aircraft of the 314th, all part of the much larger airborne delivery force. Despite difficult weather conditions and intense enemy anti-aircraft fire, all but one of the group's planes

made it home. The airborne forces were successfully inserted and contributed immeasurably to the overall success of the invasion. By the end of the day, a beach head had been well established, but reinforcements were needed.

The second NEPTUNE mission (code named FREEPORT) was flown in the early morning hours of 7 June for the purpose of resupplying previously dropped airborne forces. The 314th contributed 52 aircraft. The drop zones were said to be in Allied hands, and it was expected to be a much easier mission. It was anything but. Flying at tree top level, the 314th aircraft received intense and accurate small arms fire that did significant damage to the unarmed and unarmored C-47s and C-53s. The mission was completed, but once again at a steep cost. Three aircraft were shot down, and 11 more were rendered unflyable due to heavy damage. There were numerous instances of individual heroism during FREEPORT, and the collective efforts of the group earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation. The Allies had seized a piece of French property, and they would never let go.

In what eventually turned out to be an unsuccessful effort to end the war before Christmas, Operation MARKET GARDEN, the airborne invasion of Holland, commenced on 17 September 1944. 314th crews conducted initial airborne operations, glider tows, and resupply drops. The airborne phase went extremely well, but the overall plan proved too ambitious. In three missions between 17 and 21 September, the 314th flew 204 sorties with all but four aircraft returning.



**Airborne troops prepare to board C-47s for operation MARKET GARDEN, the airborne invasion of Holland, in September 1944.**

The 314 TCG continued to move personnel and supplies to the continent until they were ready to move over themselves. On 28 February 1945, the group began to relocate to Airfield B-44 in France. On 24 March, the group dropped paratroopers and conducted glider tows during Operation VARSITY, the airborne assault across the Rhine River and into the heart of Germany. All 80 aircraft of the 314th returned safely. The route was on. After V-E (Victory in Europe) Day, the 314 TCG evacuated Allied prisoners from Germany before being transferred back to the United States in February 1946.

Between WW II and the Korean War, the 314 TCG served in the Canal Zone in Panama, operating air terminals in the Panama and Antilles areas from October 1946 through October 1948. The group then moved to Smyrna AFB, Tennessee, and joined the 314th Troop Carrier Wing, which had been activated there on 1 November 1948. It is important to note that the 314 TCW was created *for* the group, essentially getting its numerical designation from the group. This was quite common at the time, because the wartime practice of assigning numerous operational flying groups to a single wing was not practical when those groups returned home. Generally speaking, each base needed its own support structure, under the same wing as the flying unit. Some groups went away, some wings were created, and they met in the middle. Because of this, the lineage and honors of a group was bestowed to its like-numbered wing, and the 314 TCW essentially inherited the accomplishments of its group.

The two organizations were not initially together long. From August 1950 to November 1954, the 314 TCG was detached from the wing and stationed at Ashiya, Japan, for service in the Korean War. While there, the 314 TCG was attached to the Far East Air Forces and primarily operated C-119 aircraft, transporting troops and supplies from Japan to Korea and evacuating wounded personnel. During the Korean War, the group participated in numerous major combat operations.



**314 TCG crewmembers at the controls of a C-119 Flying Boxcar.**

After the initial successes for the North Koreans following their surprise invasion on 25 June 1950, the tide was quickly turned when UN forces successfully executed amphibious landings at Inchon in September. Shortly afterward, the 314 TCG was on the scene delivering fresh troops and supplies to the newly recaptured Kimpo Airport in Seoul. In October, the group dropped paratroopers over Sunchon in support of the United Nations' assault on Pyongyang. The tables had turned, but China's entry into the conflict in November reversed them yet again. After being poised to completely overrun North Korea, UN forces were once again on the run.

In late November 1950, Chinese forces estimated at about 70,000 had completely surrounded UN forces in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir. For about two weeks, the 314 TCG participated in aerial resupply efforts, delivering ammunition, gasoline, food, and other equipment. The nature of the situation required the group to fly its C-119s very low and very slow to insure the supplies fell into the right hands. These heroic efforts allowed the better portion of UN forces to escape to safety as the harsh Korean winter settled in.

The retreat of UN forces continued, as the numerically superior Communist forces regained control of the situation and once again drove well south of the 38th parallel. These were very dark times for American soldiers on the battlefields.

By February 1951, the situation was extremely precarious for the UN forces, and they seemed on the brink of collapse. Communist forces had driven a wedge down Korea's central corridor

and threatened to cut off and surround the UN forces on the eastern and western coasts. The frigid winter, lack of supplies, constant retreat, and endless battle-fatigue had Allied morale dangerously low. A victory was desperately needed. That victory would come at Chipyeong-Ni, an area vital both in terms of its key terrain and the tactical situation at the time. In near full retreat, the Allied line was drawn there.

Chipyeong-Ni was occupied by a group of about 5,000 Allied soldiers originally organized for a counterattack in January 1951. On 11 February, the Communists began an assault that pushed right through the region and around the forces at Chipyeong-Ni, and once again UN forces were surrounded. Against all odds, they were ordered to stand and fight. When the Communists turned their full attention to capturing Chipyeong-Ni, these 5,000 men faced 30,000 to 40,000 attackers. The battle raged for three days, and supplies were dangerously low. At times, the order was given to cease fire simply because ammunition was nearly exhausted.

314 TCG aircrews dropped 87 loads of ammunition, gasoline, and rations to help sustain the forces at Chipyeong-Ni. The airdrops were just enough for them to hang on, keep fighting, and ultimately win. UN forces were finally able to break through and link up with Chipyeong-Ni from the south, and the battle lines were eventually restored near the 38th parallel, the original starting point.

Remarkably, in the defense of Chipyeong-Ni, UN forces suffered only 52 killed, 259 wounded, and 42 missing in action. Communist casualties numbered between 5,000 and 8,000, clear evidence of the value of the terrain being defended. The Communist push was thwarted, and they were eventually forced to the negotiating table.

The 314 TCG remained in Japan after the armistice in July 1953 to transport supplies to Korea and evacuate prisoners of war. The group rejoined the 314th Troop Carrier Wing in November of 1954, returning to Smyrna AFB, which had been renamed Sewart AFB.

From the wing's activation in 1948 until December 1965, the 314 TCW served as a primary troop carrier unit in the eastern United States and was involved in joint airborne training with the US Army. On 19 May 1957, the wing received the first of its Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft, the same airframe it flies today. Together with the US Army, the 314 TCW developed assault airlift operations and participated in aerial demonstrations, exercises, maneuvers, and joint operations.

In January 1966, the wing moved to Kung Kuan (later renamed Ching Chuan Kang) Air Base, Taiwan. Here, the wing provided passenger and cargo airlift throughout the Far East as well as providing combat airlift in Southeast Asia. (In August 1967, the unit was redesignated the 314th Tactical Airlift Wing.)

The list of accomplishments by the wing during the Vietnam War is incredibly lengthy. The wing participated in numerous major operations, such as GREEN LIGHT, GARFIELD, JUNCTION CITY (first large-scale personnel drop of the war), HORACE GREELEY, and WOLLOWA (first operation using the Container Delivery System), just to name a few.

Perhaps the most commonly known event of the Vietnam war was the Tet Offensive in February 1968. This surprise attack by the North Vietnamese resulted in a month-long siege of US forces at Khe Sanh. 314 TAW C-130s routinely flew into the battle zone, landing at the Marine outpost to deliver badly needed supplies, often with mortars exploding beside them as they rolled down the runway.

While serving in Southeast Asia, the 314 TAW earned its only Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with a combat “V” device. This important award was given in recognition of their “airlifting an average of 7.9 tons of passengers and cargo for each operational flying hour in Southeast Asia, in addition to performing a wide variety of tactical airlift missions under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions.”

On 31 May 1971, the 314 TAW transferred without personnel or equipment to Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, and assumed the assets of the inactivating 64th Tactical Airlift Wing. On this date, the wing also became the host organization at Little Rock AFB and shared the base facilities with the 308th Strategic Missile Wing.

The 314 TAW, under Military Airlift Command, served as a principal airlift unit involved with worldwide tactical airlift operations and, since August 1971, served as the primary C-130 training organization for all Department of Defense agencies as well as training aircrew members from selected foreign nations.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the wing conducted regular European rotations, providing the commander of the United States Air Forces Europe with a flexible theater airlift capability. The 314 TAW also began extensive training with the US Army. This training focused on training new personnel, both USAF and US Army, in the complexities of joint service airdrop procedures. The wing regularly participated in the annual TEAM SPIRIT exercise on the Korean peninsula and the annual REFORGER exercise in Western Europe. Such exercises helped the wing maintain its combat readiness, while sending a clear political message to potential aggressors that the United States would act decisively to repel aggression.

While the wing still prepared for typical war scenarios in Europe and Korea, the 1980s also saw the beginning of many humanitarian relief operations in Africa and elsewhere. Additionally, the wing started performing missions in Central America in support of American foreign policy, specifically in Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, and other missions in support of the declared war on drugs. The most visible anti-drug action was in Operation JUST CAUSE. The 314 TAW airdropped troops and equipment over Panama in December 1989 in support of that effort.

The political climate that characterized the 1970s and 1980s abruptly disappeared with the fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989. President George H.W. Bush and the US Congress applauded the end of the Cold War, predicted the end of the need for a massive military, and anticipated a largely peaceful world. However, the end of East-West tensions resulted in the emergence of numerous local wars.

The first such clash to involve the 314 TAW was the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraqi Army in August 1990. President Bush vowed to remove Hussein's occupation forces, and after a five-month build-up called Operation DESERT SHIELD, coalition forces unleashed their fury in a 40-day war that devastated Iraq. Operation DESERT STORM was primarily won through the judicious use of air power, and was a complete, if somewhat tardy, vindication of the concepts advocated by Billy Mitchell, Giulio Douhet, and numerous other early supporters of airpower. The wing began its participation in Operation DESERT SHIELD on 7 August 1990, deploying over 1,000 personnel and maintaining a constant level of 16 aircraft in the Persian Gulf. By the time the wing had redeployed to Little Rock AFB in March 1991, they had transported over 27,000 passengers and more than 25,000 tons of cargo.

On 1 December 1991, the 314 TAW was redesignated the 314th Airlift Wing and was restructured from a quad-deputate to a quad-group structure. These changes were made throughout the Air Force to bring all wings in line with the concept of the objective wing structure. The advantages of the new system were readily apparent, with a clearer chain of command and a logical, functional assignment of squadrons to groups.



**Little Rock AFB has been home to the 314th since 1971.**

Six months later, the Air Force reorganized in a similar way, with fewer major commands and units aligned on a more logical basis. On 1 June 1992, the 314 AW was assigned to the newly formed Air Mobility Command, the successor to MAC. While under AMC, the 314 AW participated in humanitarian airlift operations in Turkey and Somalia. From 17 August 1992 until early December 1992, all food and medicine flown into Somalia by the US Air Force were carried on 314 AW C-130s.

On 1 October 1993, the 314 AW experienced many more changes. The largest was the consolidation of all C-130 aircraft under Air Combat Command. Accordingly, the operational chain of command for the 314 AW changed on this date. Under the new structure, the wing reported directly to the HQ 8th Air Force, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, and then to HQ Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Virginia. This move consolidated all theater combat forces under one command, resulting in more streamlined operations. Also on this day the 314th Ground Combat Readiness Evaluation Squadron became a tenant unit at Little Rock AFB until its inactivation one year later. Finally on this date, the 16th Airlift Squadron moved without personnel or equipment to Charleston AFB, South Carolina. Concurrently, the 53 AS moved from Norton AFB, California, to Little Rock AFB and assumed the assets previously belonging to the 16 AS.

Throughout the following four years, the USAF continued to refine itself. One of the more notable changes occurred on 1 April 1997 and involved bringing operational units back under

control of the AMC and placing training units under the Air Education and Training Command. This approach split the 314 AW into many separate entities, though they all remained at Little Rock AFB. The 50 AS and 61 AS were assigned under the recently reactivated 463rd Airlift Group under AMC, while the 314 AW was assigned under AETC. Also, the Combat Aerial Delivery School was reassigned to AMC's Air Mobility Warfare Center and was redesignated the AMWC/CADS.

The decade of the 1990s was one of change, but the mission continued. After the wing's participation in the Gulf War, there were many more humanitarian missions, including Operation PROVIDE COMFORT in Iraq, Hurricane Andrew Relief in Florida, and Operations PROVIDE RELIEF and RESTORE HOPE in Somalia. The wing also supported many peacekeeping missions, including Operation NORTHERN WATCH in Turkey, Operation SOUTHERN WATCH in Saudi Arabia, Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in Haiti, and Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Finally, the 314 AW participated in numerous training exercises with the US Army, US Navy, and foreign forces.

Further changes were made to the wing structure and programmed for implementation on 1 October 2002. These included renaming the Logistics Group to the Maintenance Group, renaming the Support Group to the Mission Support Group, and renaming and realigning several of the squadrons beneath them. The new organizational chart is shown on the following page.

Since 1997, the 314 AW has focused squarely on the C-130 training mission. The wing works tirelessly to replenish the C-130 force with highly qualified aircrews with tremendous support from its local community. From WW II to the present, the 314th has been well led and has worked as a team, and the wing has been recognized for this consistently. With a constant eye toward growth, this proud tradition is sure to continue.

## 314th GROUP/WING COMMANDERS

### 314th Transport Group

2 Lt L. C. Lillie ..... 2 Mar 1942  
2 Lt J. W. Blakeslee ..... 14 May 1942  
Maj Leonard M. Rohrbough ..... 26 Jun 1942

### 314th Troop Carrier Group

Col Clayton Stiles ..... 9 Apr 1943  
Lt Col Halac G. Wilson ..... 22 Aug 1945  
Col Charles W. Steinmetz ..... 29 Nov 1945

### 314th Troop Carrier Wing (Medium)

Col Hoyt L. Prindle ..... 1 Nov 1948  
Col Norton H. Van Sicklen ..... 31 Aug 1950  
Col Hoyt L. Prindle ..... 28 Dec 1950  
Col Norton H. Van Sicklen ..... 1 Jun 1952  
Col William H. DeLacey ..... 2 Jul 1952  
Col Hoyt L. Prindle ..... 23 Aug 1952  
Col Marvin L. McNickle ..... 6 Jul 1954  
Col William Lewis, Jr. .... 1 Jul 1956  
Col Adriel N. Williams ..... 21 Jul 1956  
Col Charles W. Howe ..... 1 Aug 1957  
Col John T. Hylton, Jr. .... 8 Oct 1957  
Lt Col William F. Kelleher ..... 30 May 1958  
Col Daniel F. Tatum ..... 16 Jul 1958  
Col George M. Foster ..... 16 Jul 1960  
Col William H. DeLacey ..... 17 Aug 1960  
Col William G. Moore, Jr. .... 13 Aug 1962  
Col Arthur C. Rush ..... 1 Sep 1963

### 314th Troop Carrier Wing

Col Arthur C. Rush ..... 1 Jan 1967  
Col Paul A. Jones ..... 14 Feb 1967

### 314th Tactical Airlift Wing

Col Paul A. Jones ..... 1 Aug 1967  
Col Lyle D. Lutton ..... 12 Mar 1968  
Col Albert W. Jones ..... 12 Oct 1968

Col William T. Phillips ..... 15 Jul 1970  
Col Roy C. Staley ..... 22 Jan 1971  
Col Andrew P. Iosue ..... 15 May 1971  
Col Richard J. Gibney ..... 31 May 1971  
Col Richard T. Drury ..... 31 Jul 1972  
Col Frank W. Janssen ..... 14 May 1973  
Brig Gen Eugene W. Gauch, Jr. .... 18 Oct 1973

Col Robert F. Coverdale ..... 3 Nov 1973  
 Col John E. Davis ..... 16 Jul 1974  
 Brig Gen Russell E. Mohney ..... 19 Jan 1976  
 Col Donald M. Nagel ..... 1 Aug 1977  
 Brig Gen Alfred G. Hansen ..... 16 Oct 1978  
 Col Dan W. Freeman ..... 17 Jul 1981  
 Col William A. Kehler ..... 25 Jul 1983  
 Col Floyd E. Hargrove ..... 11 Apr 1985  
 Col Charles C. Barnhill, Jr. .... 26 Mar 1986  
 Col Donald E. Loranger, Jr. .... 4 May 1988  
 Col Albert R. Hart ..... 3 Nov 1989

314th Airlift Wing

Col Charles J. Wax ..... 30 Sep 1991  
 Brig Gen Fredric N. Buckingham ..... 18 Jun 1993  
 Brig Gen Donald A. Streater ..... 20 May 1994  
 Brig Gen Jack R. Holbein, Jr. .... 15 Jul 1996  
 Brig Gen Paul J. Fletcher ..... 24 Sep 1998  
 Brig Gen David J. Scott ..... 18 Jul 2001  
 Brig Gen Joseph M. Reheiser ..... 15 Sep 2003  
 Brig Gen Kip L. Self ..... 9 Sep 2005

## WING HONORS

### *Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers*

- (1)  Grenada, 23 Oct - 21 Nov 1983
- (2)  Panama, 20 Dec 1989 - 31 Jan 1990

### *Decorations*

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device

- (1)  1 Nov 1967 - 31 Dec 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

- (1)  11 Jan - 14 Feb 1955
- (2)  1 Jan 1960 - 31 Dec 1961
- (3)  1 Jan 1975 - 30 Jun 1976
- (4)  1 Jun 1985 - 31 May 1986
- (5)  1 Jul 1991 - 30 Jun 1993
- (6)  1 Jul 1993 - 30 Jun 1995
- (7)  1 Jul 1995 - 31 Mar 1997
- (8)  1 Jul 1997 - 30 Jun 1999
- (9)  1 Jul 1999 - 30 Jun 2001
- (10)  1 Jul 2001 - 30 Jun 2003
- (11)  1 Jul 2003 - 30 Jun 2004

### *Service Streamers*

- (1)  World War II American Theater

### *Campaign Streamers*

World War II

- (1)  Sicily
- (2)  Naples-Foggia
- (3)  Rome-Arno
- (4)  Normandy
- (5)  Northern France
- (6)  Rhineland
- (7)  Central Europe

### *Decorations*

Distinguished Unit Citations

- (1)  Sicily, 11 Jul 1943
- (2)  France, 6-7 Jun 1944

NOTE: All World War II honors were bestowed to the wing from the 314th Troop Carrier Group (forerunner of today's Operations Group).

**Office of History  
HQ 314th Airlift Wing  
Little Rock AFB, Arkansas**